

Welcome to the Department of Health and Human Services!

At the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), *"Helping people live better lives"* is something we do everyday. Each individual and each job is equally important. We depend on you to do your best so that all people in Nebraska are effectively served. Keep in mind the importance of the functions of other programs, offices and facilities within the DHHS and work in cooperation with them.

As a temporary employee or intern associated with the Department of Health and Human Services you are responsible to read and become familiar with all these policies as well as the other rules, regulations and internal processes that apply specifically to your work. Questions about the information can be referred to your supervisor or a Human Resources and Development Manager.

Abuse and Neglect

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is committed to ensuring a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for the individuals it serves. You are prohibited from committing any type of abuse or neglect against individuals served by DHHS. If you have reasonable cause to believe a DHHS client is being or has been subject to abuse and/or neglect you are to immediately take reasonable steps to intervene to protect the client and report the matter to DHHS management. (See the attached DHHS Abuse and Neglect policy for more information.)

Attendance

You are expected to report for duty as scheduled. It is your responsibility to personally phone your supervisor or the designated person to report your absences or tardies within the agreed upon timeframes. You are expected to provide an acceptable reason for the absence or tardy and indicate the time or date you expect to return to work.

Code of Conduct

You are expected to maintain and exercise the highest moral and ethical standards in carrying out your responsibilities and functions and to perform your job in a professional manner. You are expected to be honest, trustworthy and respectful. You are expected to:

- Demonstrate only proper and unbiased involvement with customers.
- Maintain appropriate relationships with clients, patients, members, co-workers and management.
- Ensure personal appearances and workplaces portray professional standards.
- Maintain constructive communication with others.
- Work to achieve and maintain proficiency at assigned duties.
- Ensure your personal relationships do not influence professional decisions and avoid even the appearance of impropriety, bias or conflict of interest.
- Immediately report to supervisors any situation where a conflict of interest could be perceived.
- Abide by state and federal laws and by the rules and regulations which cover your employment.
- Immediately report any information which could impact an individual case, contract or other DHHS business.
- Understand all work products developed on work time belong to the DHHS.
- Refrain from accepting any outside financial gain or benefit through the performance of your duties.

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

You have a responsibility to comply with all laws, regulations and internal processes in providing access to records and maintaining the confidentiality of the records. You are only to access the records and information that are needed to do your job or that you have a need to know. If you gain access to a record, or information from a record, which has been designated by law or regulation as confidential, whether as part of your regular job duties or by accident, you may not further share that information with anyone other than those people within the agency who have the right to know this information. Information concerning the identities of recipients or applicants for assistance, including, but not limited to, amounts and types of payments, and social background information pertaining to individuals or families is to be held in the strictest confidence and may not be released for any purpose not specifically authorized by DHHS. Even after your employment and/or internship with DHHS ends, you are expected to maintain the confidentiality of this information.

If you appear before a legislative committee, the courts, the Parole Board, Pardons Board or any other administrative or judicial body, you shall not purport to speak on behalf of the DHHS, unless so authorized by the agency director or designee.

Discrimination and Harassment

You have the right and responsibility to treat and be treated fairly, equally, with dignity, respect and to be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, disability or national origin. DHHS encourages the reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination and will take immediate and appropriate action to investigate the alleged discrimination. Complainants and other persons involved in the reporting and/or investigation of an allegation of discrimination will not be subjected to retaliation, coercion, intimidation or fear of reprisal. (See the attached DHHS Discrimination and Harassment policy for more information.)

Dress Code

You will maintain a high standard of personal appearance and grooming. The clothing you wear on the job should reflect the requirements of your job and working conditions. Your supervisor has the responsibility and authority to determine what attire reflects the requirements of the job and working conditions.

Drug Free Work Place

You have the right to work in an environment free from the detrimental effects of illicit drugs or alcohol. You are responsible to ensure you do not bring drugs or alcohol in the workplace or report to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. You may be subject to drug and alcohol testing when there is reasonable cause to believe you may be under the influence. (See the attached DHHS Drug Testing policy for more information.)

Law Violations

Immediately upon your return to work you are required to report in writing to your supervisor any charge and conviction of law violations, excluding minor traffic offenses (i.e. speeding; parking tickets). Individuals listed on the Adult Protective Services/Child Protective Services Registry with a determination of abuse or neglect shall not be eligible to work or remain in a position providing direct care or client services delivery.

No Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited in any state owned, leased or occupied building, vehicles owned or leased by the state and in some locations greater constraints apply (such as campus/grounds wide). This no smoking policy applies seven days a week and twenty four hour a day.

Observing Safety Regulations

Safety is a shared responsibility between you and your supervisor. It is important for you to be "safety conscious" and take precautions to avoid injury, illness and exposure to occupational disease while in the performance of duties. You are expected to follow all safety rules and regulations and are to bring potentially unsafe working conditions to the attention of supervisors for review and appropriate action. If you sustain an injury during the performance of your duties you need to immediately notify your supervisor.

Political Activities

You may engage in political activities as long as it occurs outside your work time or while on approved leave. You may not display political material in your work space or wear clothing or buttons endorsing a political candidate or position while performing state duties. If you are in a position which is funded entirely or partially with federal money you are covered by the federal Hatch Act and you are barred from being a candidate for partisan office.

State Property

State property is to be used for work related reasons. You shall not use state property or time for your own personal use or benefit. You must go outside the workplace for such things as postage, photocopies, computer use, sending and receiving faxes or any other personal business. Your personal business shall be conducted on your own time either on breaks or non-work hours.

You may use a DHHS telephone for essential personal business as long as there are no costs charged to the state, the use does not interfere with state business and is kept to a minimum. Essential personal business is defined as local or long distance calls to children at home, teachers, doctors, day care centers and baby sitters to inform family members of unexpected schedule changes or other essential personal business. Essential personal long distance calls shall be either collect, charged to a third party, non-state number or charged to a personal credit card.

Property of the State of Nebraska which is lost or suspected stolen should be immediately reported to your supervisor.

Threatening Behavior

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is committed to providing a work environment that is safe, secure, and free of harassment, threats, intimidation, and violence. Acts or threats of violence, whether made directly or indirectly through words, gestures, or symbols will be considered serious by DHHS and appropriate actions will be taken. Immediately report to your supervisor any acts or threats of violence.

Weapons in the Workplace

You are prohibited from bringing weapons into the workplace. Possession of firearms and explosive devices are also prohibited. This applies to all DHHS occupied buildings, grounds, parking areas and agency vehicles.

Please also review the following DHHS Policies:

- DHHS Policy on Abuse and Neglect, HHSS-2003-001, Effective Date: November 25, 2003
- DHHS Policy on Discrimination and Harassment, DHHS-2009-002, Effective Date: September 9, 2009
- DHHS Policy on Drug Testing, HHSS-2004-001, Effective Date: March 1, 2004

Your Facility, Service Area or Program may provide you with information on additional policies you need to become familiar with.

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